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Front Page Edit Page Other Page

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The John Birch Society Fights Reds the Wrong Way.

The John Birch Society is dedicated to fighting Communist subversion in the United States. It seeks the support of Americans "of fervent patriotism and unassailable character." Membership in the society appears to have passed the 100,000 mark and reached into virtually every state. The volume of the society's published material suggests that it is amply financed.



Welch

Nothing in these superficial facts provides a cause for disquiet. Surely the society's aim is acceptable, even commendable. In our free society we not only tolerate but encourage Americans "of fervent patriotism and unassailable character" to organize for the promotion of the common good.

Beneath the surface, however, the John Birch Society pursues its goal by methods that are wholly indefensible. It operates through

cells. It acorns the so-called democratic process and forces its cell members to accept without question the orders handed down from the leaders. It encourages its members to spy on their neighbors and report any evidence of suspected subversion. Once a teacher, a minister, a businessman or any other member of the community is branded by the society, the society's members are rallied to harass the subject with letters, petitions and telephone calls.

Strong disapproval of this approach has just been voiced by former Vice President Nixon. In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, Mr. Nixon has deplored the techniques of the John Birch Society. The evil tactics of the Communists, he indicated, are just as evil when they are adopted to fight Communism.

"It may at times seem unrealistic and naive to follow the rules of the game when our opponents are so unscrupulous and completely devoid of morality," Mr. Nixon wrote. "But, in the end, refusing to resort to methods that are wrong not only is right but in the long run is the most effective way to combat an evil doctrine like Communism."

The extremist position of the John Birch Society comes clearer in some of the expressed views of its leader, Robert H. W. Welch Jr. of Belmont, Mass. Mr. Welch is supporting a petition to impeach Chief Justice Earl Warren. He regards the income tax and the social security laws as parts of the Communist plot to overthrow this



"We're Tramping Out the Villains
In This Communist Hordel"

—Haystack, Louisville Courier-Journal

country. He has charged that "Milton Eisenhower is actually Dwight Eisenhower's superior and boss within the Communist Party." He has described the late John Foster Dulles as "a Communist agent," and CIA director Allen Dulles as "a supporter of Communism."

These are extremist views. They are far out on the fringe of the political spectrum. The danger is that many well-meaning individuals may be enticed into supporting the John Birch Society because of its expressed aim, and without taking the trouble to explore the society's questionable methods and its even more questionable philosophical base.